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Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 12854 202130Z

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8711

S E C R E T CAIRO 12854

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, SA, EG, US
SUBJECT: SAUDI TRAINING OF EGYPTIAN PILOTS

REF: STATE 300207 (RPTG JIDDA 8358)

1. I RECOGNIZE PROBLEM THAT SAUDI (OR IRANIAN) TRAINING OF EGYPTIAN PILOTS ON US PROVIDED AIRCRAFT POSES FOR US. ALTHOUGH I HAVE NO DIRECT KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT WAS SAID TO SADAT AND/OR FAHMY ON THIS POINT DURING SADAT VISIT. I SEEM TO RECALL BEING TOLD BY SOMEONE THAT WE HAD TALKED WITH ONE OR THE OTHER ABOUT THIS MATTER AND THAT THE EGYPTIAN SIDE INDICATED UNDERSTANDING. IF SO, THERE SHOULD BE NO REAL PROBLEM.

2. IF NOT, WE SHOULD EXPECT THE EGYPTIANS TO BE BITTER ABOUT ANY US REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE TRAINING PROGRAMS IN SAUDI ARABIA OR IRAN. THERE IS A GROWING BELIEF HERE THAT, WHATEVER CONGRESSIONAL PROBLEMS WE MAY HAVE ON THIS SCORE, WE HAVE BEEN PULLING THE WOOL OVER EGYPTIAN EYES ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR INTENTIONS TO OBTAIN APPROVAL TO BEGIN AN ARMS SALES PROGRAM FOR EGYPT. I HAVE OF LATE HEARD SUGGESTIONS THAT VISITING CONGRESSMEN SEEM MORE WILLING TO DO SO THAN IS ADMINISTRATION. THIS IDEA IS GIVEN BY CONGRESSMEN WHO TELL EGYPTIANS THAT ADMINISTRATION HAS NEVER ASKED FOR APPROVAL TO SELL ARMS TO EGYPT AND LEAVE IMPRESSION, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THAT CONSIDERABLE CONGRESSIONAL SENTIMENT EXISTS IN FAVOR OF SUCH SALES.
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3. ADDITIONALLY, OF COURSE, ANNOUNCEMENT IN LAST FEW DAYS
OF LARGE ARMS SALE TO ISRAEL, INCLUDING F-15S, HAS
BEEN WIDELY NOTED HERE. CONTRAST BETWEEN THIS AND INSISTENCE ON
CANCELLATION OF SIMPLE TRAINING PROGRAMS WILL UNQUESTIONABLY
EVOKE CRITICAL COMMENT.

4. EGYPTIANS CAN PROBABLY BE PERSUADED TO TAKE AN
INITIATIVE WITH SAUDI RE TRAINING, BUT ASKING THEM TO DO
SO (UNLESS PROBLEM WAS DISCUSSED DURING SADAT VISIT) WILL AT MINIMUM
RAISE SERIOUS QUESTIONS IN MINDS EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP AND MILITARY
ABOUT OUR RELIABILITY.
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